

him with Allah. Then Allah allows Satan to subjugate the slave and have power over him.

He has power over the believers due to their sins

A hadith states, “Allah is with the judge as long as he does not commit any injustice. If he commits any injustice, Allah is free from him and keeps Satan with him.”¹

Abu al-Faraj ibn al-Jauzi has related a unique story from al-Hassan al-Basri. The story, depending on how authentic it is, shows the ability of a human in overpowering Satan if he is sincere to Allah in his religion and it shows how Satan can take advantage of the human when he strays. Al-Hasan al-Basri narrated that there was a tree that was worshipped instead of Allah. One man decided to chop down that tree. He was going to chop down the tree out of anger for the sake of Allah. On the way to the tree he met Iblees who was in the form of a man. Iblees asked him, “What do you plan on doing?” The man answered, “I am going to chop down that tree that is worshipped instead of Allah.” Satan said, “If you do not worship it, why should it harm you if others do so?” The man replied, “I will chop it down.” Satan then told him, “Would you like something better than that? Do not cut it and you will get two dinars every morning under your pillow.” “From where will I get that?” the man asked. “I will give it to you,” said Iblees. The man returned and the next morning he found two *dinars* under his pillow. The following morning he again found two *dinars* under his pillow. On the following morning he did not find anything. He got upset and went to chop down the tree. Satan again appeared to him in the shape of the same man. Satan asked him, “What do you want to do?” The man answered, “I plan on cutting down that tree that is worshipped instead of Allah!” Iblees said, “You have lied. There is no way you will be able to do it.” The man left to chop it down. The earth swallowed him and choked him until it almost killed him. Iblees asked, “Do you know who I am? I am Satan. I met you for the first time when you were angry for the

¹ This was recorded by al-Haakim and al-Baihaqi with a *hasan* chain. See al-Albani, *Sabih al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p.130.

sake of Allah and I had no power over you. I deceived you by two dinars and you stopped what you had intended to do [for the sake of Allah]. Now you have come because you are angry about the two dinars, and I have gotten mastery over you.”*

Allah has also informed us in His Book about a person who was given the signs of Allah and was aware of them, but then he left all of that and Allah let Satan gain mastery over him, Satan then seduced him and misled him and he became a lesson for others and a story that has been passed on. Allah says in the Quran,

وَأْتَلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي ءَاتَيْنَاهُ ءَايَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ
فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَنُكِنِّيهِ ۖ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى
الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِن تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ
تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثُ ذَٰلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِءَايَاتِنَا فَاقْصِصْ
الْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“Recite unto them the tale of him to whom We gave Our revelations, but he sloughed them off, so Satan overtook him and he became of those who were lead astray. And had We willed We would have raised him by their means, but he clung to the earth and followed his own lust. Therefore his likeness is as the likeness of a dog; if you attack him, he pants with his tongue out, and if you leave him alone he pants with his tongue out. Such is the likeness of the people who deny Our revelations.

¹Ibn al-Jauzi, *Talbees Iblees*, p.43. [The author, al-Ashqar alluded to the fact that the authenticity of this story needs to be ascertained. Most likely, it is from the *Israaeeliyyaat* or stories of the Jews and Christians. Al-Ashqar stated that the story demonstrates how a pious person can overcome Satan. Actually, the story does not demonstrate that since the person was originally going to chop down the tree for the sake of Allah but he was not able to overcome Satan's plot against him. Allah knows best.—JZ]

Narrate unto them the history (of the men of old), that haply they may take thought” (*al-Araaf* 175-76). It is clear that this parable applies to the one who knows the truth and refuses to accept it, like the Jews who knew that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a true messenger from the Lord but they disbelieved in him.

This is all of the story that Allah gives us. Some say that the verse refers to Balaam ibn Baoura who was a pious person and then he became a disbeliever. Some say it refers to Umayya ibn Abu as-Salit who worshipped Allah during the days of ignorance and who had met the Prophet but refused to believe in him out of envy. He had hoped that he would be the next messenger to be sent. We do not possess any authentic text that clearly identifies who the verse refers to. “To receive the signs of Allah and then to disbelieve in them” is a description of someone who is very similar to Satan. This is so because Satan became a disbeliever after he clearly knew and recognized the truth. This is one of the things that the Prophet (peace be upon him) feared most for his nation. Al-Hafez Abu Yala recorded from Hudhaifa bin al-Yaman that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “From the things that I fear for you is a man who recites the Quran until you see its splendor upon him. His cloak is Islam and he wears it until Allah wishes and then he throws it behind his back and attacks his neighbor with a sword and accuses him of polytheism.” [Hudhaifa] said, “O Messenger of Allah, which should be killed, the one who is attacking or the one who is attacked.” He (peace be upon him) said, “Nay, the one who is attacking.”

Satan s fear and fleeing from some of the slaves of Allah

If a slave holds fast to Islam, has a sincere belief in his heart and stays within the bounds set by Allah, then Satan departs and flees from him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Umar,

إن الشيطان ليفرق منك يا عمر

¹Ibn Katheer said, “Its chain is good.” *Tafseer ibn Katbeer, vol. 3, p. 252.*